

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1773

To make the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands eligible for the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 2021

Mr. SABLAM introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To make the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands eligible for the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*

2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Northern Marianas

5       Family Assistance Act”.

1   **SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE**  
2                   **NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS FOR THE**  
3                   **TANF PROGRAM.**

4       (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 419(5) of the Social Secu-  
5     rity Act (42 U.S.C. 619(5)) is amended by striking “and  
6     American Samoa” and inserting “American Samoa, and  
7     the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands”.

8       (b) FAMILY ASSISTANCE GRANT.—

9               (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 403(a)(1)(B) of  
10    such Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(1)(B)) is amended—  
11               (A) by striking “specified in” and inserting  
12               “in effect for purposes of”; and

13               (B) by adding at the end the following:  
14               “Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, the  
15    State family assistance grant for the Common-  
16    wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for  
17    each fiscal year shall be the lesser of the  
18    amount that equals 80 percent of the total ex-  
19    penditures of the Commonwealth under the  
20    Commonwealth program funded under this part  
21    in the fiscal year, or the mandatory ceiling  
22    amount (as defined in section 1108) with re-  
23    spect to Guam.”.

24               (2) APPROPRIATION.—Section 403(a)(1)(C) of  
25    such Act (42 U.S.C. 603(a)(1)(C)) is amended by  
26    adding at the end the following: “The dollar amount

1       in effect under this subparagraph for a fiscal year  
2       shall be the amount specified in the preceding sen-  
3       tence increased by the mandatory ceiling amount (as  
4       defined in section 1108) with respect to Guam, and  
5       an amount equal to that increase shall be reserved  
6       for a grant under this paragraph to the Commo-  
7       nwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

8           (c) ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CONTINGENCY FUND.—

9              (1) IN GENERAL.—Effective on October 1 of  
10          the 5th fiscal year immediately following the 1st fis-  
11          cal year referred to in subsection (g):

12               (A) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 403(b)(7) of  
13          the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 603(b)(7)) is  
14          amended by striking “States and the District of  
15          Columbia” and inserting “States, the District  
16          of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of the  
17          Northern Mariana Islands”.

18               (B) EXCLUSION FROM LIMITATION ON  
19          PAYMENTS TO THE TERRITORIES.—Section  
20          1108(a)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1308(a)(2))  
21          is amended by inserting “, or any payment  
22          made to the Commonwealth of the Northern  
23          Mariana Islands under section 403(b)” before  
24          the period.

(2) DEVELOPMENT OF NEEDY STATE CRITERIA.—As soon as is practicable but not later than the date paragraph (1) of this subsection takes effect, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall work with the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to develop the criteria to be used in determining whether, on or after such date, the Commonwealth is a needy State for purposes of section 403(b) of the Social Security Act, which shall not include the criteria used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in determining unemployment or the caseload criteria used in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

14 (d) INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS  
15 AND PROHIBITION.—

(1) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO  
OPERATION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND  
FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PRO-  
GRAMS.—Section 402(a) of the Social Security Act  
(42 U.S.C. 602(a)) is amended in each of para-  
graphs (2) and (3) by adding at the end the fol-  
lowing: “The preceding sentence shall not apply with  
respect to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
iana Islands.”.

1                             (2) MANDATORY WORK REQUIREMENTS.—Sec-  
2                             tions 407 and 409(a)(3) of such Act shall not apply  
3                             to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-  
4                             lands.

5                             (3) BAN ON ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES NOT  
6                             ASSIGNING CERTAIN SUPPORT RIGHTS TO THE  
7                             STATE.—Section 408(a)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
8                             608(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
9                             lowing: “The preceding sentence shall not apply with  
10                             respect to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
11                             iana Islands.”.

12                             (4) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT REQUIRE-  
13                             MENT.—Section 409(a)(7) of such Act shall not  
14                             apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
15                             iana Islands.

16                             (e) ASSESSMENT OF WORK, EMPLOYMENT, AND  
17                             TRAINING PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Health and  
18                             Human Services shall seek to negotiate an agreement with  
19                             the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
20                             under which the performance of the work, employment,  
21                             and training program of the Commonwealth will be as-  
22                             sessed.

23                             (f) TRANSITION PROVISIONS.—With respect to each  
24                             of the 4 fiscal years immediately following the 1st fiscal  
25                             year referred to in subsection (g) of this section:

1                             (1) EXEMPTION FROM LIMITATION ON USE OF  
2                             GRANT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES.—Sec-  
3                             tion 404(b) of the Social Security Act shall not  
4                             apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-  
5                             iana Islands.

6                             (2) INAPPLICABILITY OF PENALTY FOR FAIL-  
7                             URE OF STATE RECEIVING AMOUNTS FROM CONTIN-  
8                             GENCY FUND TO MAINTAIN 100 PERCENT OF HIS-  
9                             TORIC EFFORT.—Section 409(a)(10) of such Act  
10                            shall not apply to the Commonwealth of the North-  
11                            ern Mariana Islands.

12                            (g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Not later than Octo-  
13                            ber 1 of the 1st fiscal year that begins after the date of  
14                            the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and  
15                            Human Services shall provide the Commonwealth of the  
16                            Northern Mariana Islands with technical assistance in de-  
17                            veloping a plan to meet the requirements of section 402  
18                            of the Social Security Act.

19                            (h) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in sub-  
20                            section (c), the amendments made by this section shall  
21                            take effect on October 1 of the 2nd fiscal year that begins  
22                            after the date of the enactment of this Act.

